

THE THIRTEEN COLONIES

Welcome to the Thirteen Colonies! Beginning in the early 1600's, people from many countries in Europe crossed the Atlantic Ocean to explore and establish colonies along the eastern coast of America. By 1776, there were a total of thirteen separate colonies, all under British rule.

A colony is a piece of land that is claimed and governed by a distant ruler or landlord from a foreign country. Each colony was originally claimed by an explorer in the name of a country or a **charter company**. Royal grants by the British king were given for land to charter companies, groups of people, or individuals. Land grants often overlapped and boundaries were unclear. There were constant disagreements about land ownership and border lines among colonists.

Settlers moved to the colonies for several reasons. Some came for **religious freedom**, some for **business opportunities**. Others were just adventurous. And, against their will, many Africans were brought as **slaves**. Even though the colonies were settled by many different **nationalities**, eventually all these Thirteen Colonies came under British rule.

The relationship between the **native Americans** and the settlers was often very difficult. Tribes of "Indians", as they were mistakenly called, had already occupied this large area of land for thousands of years. Their attitude towards the land was different from the Europeans. They didn't feel anyone could own land. The Europeans, on the other hand, were intent on acquiring property. This left less room for the native Americans and their nature-oriented way of life. Although there were some peaceful agreements, altercations were common, many violent. The native Americans had another serious problem--they lacked **immunities** to European diseases and often died in large numbers.

MAP ACTIVITIES

By filling in the following details, you'll begin to see the geography of the time of the original Thirteen Colonies. Be neat when labeling--use a sharp pencil. Colored pencils work better than markers. Refer to **Map Key** for symbols and suggested colors. Color in the drawings and title, too!

CITIES

Label the major colonial cities already marked on the map:

Boston Plymouth
Newport Providence
New York Philadelphia
Jamestown Charleston
Savannah Williamsburg

MOUNTAINS

Using a green pencil and the symbol in **Map Key**, draw these on the map:

White Mountains
Adirondack Mountains
Appalachian Mountains

NATIVE AMERICANS

Many native American tribes lived in the areas occupied by the colonists. Label the areas with some of these tribal names:

Abenaki Powhatan
Delaware Mohawk
Narragansett

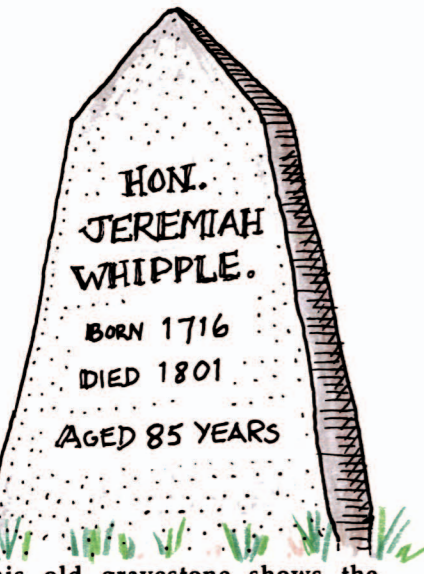
ATLANTIC OCEAN

Label and shade along the coastline with blue pencil.

RIVERS

Draw these rivers, then label and shade them. Some of these rivers actually form boundary lines.

Connecticut Merrimack
Hudson Potomac
Delaware Roanoke
Susquehanna

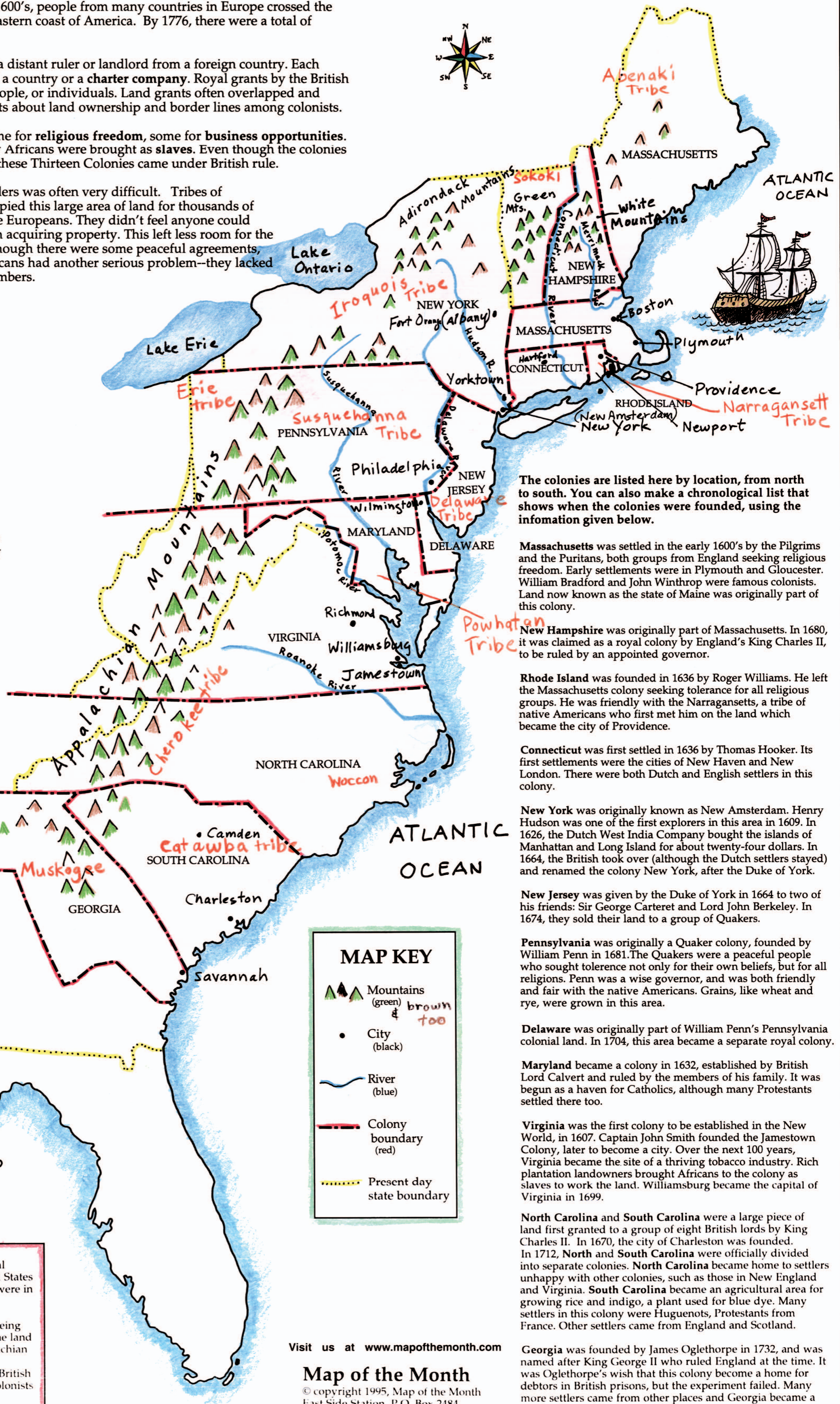


This old gravestone shows the dates of a man who lived in the colony of Rhode Island. When he died, had the colony become a state yet? What events would he have witnessed during his lifetime? What tribe of native Americans lived near him? How would he have traveled to other cities?

Are there any old graveyards in your area? If so, see if anyone buried there was alive during the colonial period--are there any famous historical figures? Are there any plots devoted to entire families? Who lived during the colonial period? By their names, can you guess what nationalities they were? Based on your location and what you know about life at that time, what occupations might these people have had?

This map represents the approximate boundary lines of the original Thirteen Colonies from the early to mid 1700's. Present day United States boundaries are also shown so that you can see where the colonies were in relation to them.

In the early days of the colonies, boundary lines were constantly being disputed. Maps of the period were not very accurate, as much of the land was not yet thoroughly explored. During colonial times, the Appalachian mountains served as a natural western boundary for some of the colonies, since there was not much travel beyond them. In 1763, a British proclamation created a western boundary line, to try to keep the colonists from moving westward into Indian territories.



The colonies are listed here by location, from north to south. You can also make a chronological list that shows when the colonies were founded, using the information given below.

Massachusetts was settled in the early 1600's by the Pilgrims and the Puritans, both groups from England seeking religious freedom. Early settlements were in Plymouth and Gloucester. William Bradford and John Winthrop were famous colonists. Land now known as the state of Maine was originally part of this colony.

New Hampshire was originally part of Massachusetts. In 1680, it was claimed as a royal colony by England's King Charles II, to be ruled by an appointed governor.

Rhode Island was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams. He left the Massachusetts colony seeking tolerance for all religious groups. He was friendly with the Narragansett, a tribe of native Americans who first met him on the land which became the city of Providence.

Connecticut was first settled in 1636 by Thomas Hooker. Its first settlements were the cities of New Haven and New London. There were both Dutch and English settlers in this colony.

New York was originally known as New Amsterdam. Henry Hudson was one of the first explorers in this area in 1609. In 1626, the Dutch West India Company bought the islands of Manhattan and Long Island for about twenty-four dollars. In 1664, the British took over (although the Dutch settlers stayed) and renamed the colony New York, after the Duke of York.

New Jersey was given by the Duke of York in 1664 to two of his friends: Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley. In 1674, they sold their land to a group of Quakers.

Pennsylvania was originally a Quaker colony, founded by William Penn in 1681. The Quakers were a peaceful people who sought tolerance not only for their own beliefs, but for all religions. Penn was a wise governor, and was both friendly and fair with the native Americans. Grains, like wheat and rye, were grown in this area.

Delaware was originally part of William Penn's Pennsylvania colonial land. In 1704, this area became a separate royal colony.

Maryland became a colony in 1632, established by British Lord Calvert and ruled by the members of his family. It was begun as a haven for Catholics, although many Protestants settled there too.

Virginia was the first colony to be established in the New World, in 1607. Captain John Smith founded the Jamestown Colony, later to become a city. Over the next 100 years, Virginia became the site of a thriving tobacco industry. Rich plantation landowners brought Africans to the colony as slaves to work the land. Williamsburg became the capital of Virginia in 1699.

North Carolina and South Carolina were a large piece of land first granted to a group of eight British lords by King Charles II. In 1670, the city of Charleston was founded. In 1712, North and South Carolina were officially divided into separate colonies. North Carolina became home to settlers unhappy with other colonies, such as those in New England and Virginia. South Carolina became an agricultural area for growing rice and indigo, a plant used for blue dye. Many settlers in this colony were Huguenots, Protestants from France. Other settlers came from England and Scotland.

Georgia was founded by James Oglethorpe in 1732, and was named after King George II who ruled England at the time. It was Oglethorpe's wish that this colony become a home for debtors in British prisons, but the experiment failed. Many more settlers came from other places and Georgia became a royal colony of the king in 1753.

MAP KEY

- Mountains (green)
- City (black)
- River (blue)
- Colony boundary (red)
- Present day state boundary

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Map of the Month

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